

Prineville District
Finding of No Significant Impact
Determination

Introduction:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (Environmental Assessment (EA) No. OR-056-03-104) for PacifiCorp to install 49 43-foot power poles and aerial lines to supply power to the private property for The Resort at Pronghorn. Also included on the power poles will be Qwest to provide telephone service and Bend Cable to provide cable TV in the area southeast of Redmond in Deschutes County. The legal description is T. 16 S., R. 13 E., Section 7, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 17, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and Section 18 W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Willamette Meridian. The primary purpose and need of this project is to address the following objectives:

1. Limit the fragmentation of wildlife habitat on BLM managed lands that may be caused by the ROW,
2. Reduce disturbance to soils and vegetation on BLM managed land and limit the potential for the invasion of noxious weeds,
3. Maintain current recreational uses of the BLM managed land and reduce the potential for negative influences on the enjoyment of the BLM managed land,
4. Maintain or increase public safety on BLM managed land,
5. Use existing ROW corridors where possible,
6. Limit the potential impact to cultural resources, and
7. Limit impacts to and conflicts with existing permitted uses of the BLM managed land, including grazing and military activities.

The project area is approximately five and one-quarter miles southwest of the junction of Highway 97 and Highway 126 and three miles east from Highway 97 across BLM managed land to The Resort at Pronghorn property. The EA is attached to and incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination. A no action alternative and two action alternatives were analyzed in the EA.

The proposed project involves power, telephone, and cable lines being strung above ground on 43 foot utility poles. The utilities would run in a new corridor west of and adjacent to the existing BPA power lines. The total length of this corridor would be approximately 3.0 miles, with a utility pole every 300 feet, with approximately 49 poles. Each power pole would be supported by two guy wires strung to an anchor and a one-inch diameter anchor rod. The anchor rods would be buried in a hole 8 to 10 feet deep. Each end pole and angle pole would be supported by four guy wires, anchored in the same manner. The new above ground utility line would connect to the existing above ground line along the BNSF Railroad and route utilities to the east across BLM managed land to a point 300 feet west of the resort property (where the utilities would transition from above ground to below ground).

The underground portion of the proposal (300 feet west of the resort property) would deviate from the existing roadbed, due to the winding nature of the road. Two underground vaults (7' x 9') would be required. No road improvements would be made and no new permanent roads would be created.

Chapter 2 of the EA fully describes the alternatives considered, elaborates on issues raised during scoping and identifies potential impacts related to the different alternatives.

Plan Conformance:

The proposed project has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with one or more of the following BLM plans and associated Record of Decision(s):

Brothers/La Pine Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, dated July 1989, pages 29, 33, &34

- "...actions approved will be consistent with the objectives of the RMP."
- "Each right-of-way shall be limited to the area necessary for operation and maintenance, will consider the protection of public safety and will do no unnecessary damage to the environment."
- "Public lands will continue to be available for rights-of-way, including multiple use and single use utility/transportation corridor following existing routes, communication sites and roads."
- "All right-of-way applications will be reviewed using the criteria of following existing corridors wherever practical and avoiding proliferation of separate rights-of-way."

Finding of No Significant Impact Determination:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Brothers/La Pine RMP/FEIS. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context: The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately three miles of BLM administered land and by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and the additional criteria as required by the following Instruction Memorandum, Acts and Executive Orders: Instruction Memorandum No. 99-178, the Lacey Act, as amended; the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974; the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; Executive Order 13112 on Invasive Species; Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice; Clean Water Act of 1987; Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments to the Clean Water Act of 1996; Executive Order 12088 on federal compliance with pollution control standards, as amended; Executive Order 12589 on Superfund compliance; and Executive Order dated July 14, 1982 on intergovernmental review of federal programs.

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The proposed action would impact resources as described in Chapter 2, and 4 of the EA. Mitigations to reduce impacts to wildlife, soil, vegetation, noxious weeds, were incorporated into the design of the

action alternatives. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the Brothers/La Pine RMP/FEIS.

2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** The proposed action would increase the possibility for wildfire or public safety hazards.
3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** The historic and cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and no cultural material was observed that would be impacted by the project. There are no effects on park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The proposed action alternative is not scientifically controversial.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The actions considered in the preferred alternative were considered by an interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the effects of the preferred alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 4 of the EA.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 4 of the EA.
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** Mitigations to reduce impacts to wildlife have been

incorporated into the design of the action alternatives. No other threatened or endangered plants or animals were observed in the area.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of a Federal, State, Local, or Tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-Federal requirements are consistent with Federal requirements.** The project does not violate any known Federal, State, Local or Tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Furthermore, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.
11. **Comply with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (water resource development projects only).** There are no floodplains, wetlands or water resource projects involved in this project.
12. **Involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E)) not already decided in an approved land use plan.** There are no unresolved conflicts not already approved in land use plans.
13. **Have a disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations; Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).** This project does not have a disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations; Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).
14. **Restrict access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites; Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites). Have significant adverse effect on Indian Trust Resources.** This project does not restrict access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites; Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites). This project does not have significant adverse effects on Indian Trust Resources.
15. **Contribute to the introduction, existence, or spread of: Federally listed noxious weeds (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act); or invasive non-native species; Executive Order 13112 (Invasive Species).** The applicant would be required to suppress noxious weeds within the specified ROW according to BLM standards for noxious weed suppression for a period of three years following construction. All construction equipment would be required to be washed with, at a minimum, a high pressure nozzle prior to arrival and departure on BLM managed lands.
16. **Have a direct or indirect adverse impact on energy development, production, supply, and/or distribution; Executive Order 13212 (Actions to Expedite Energy-Related Projects).** This project does not have a direct or indirect adverse impact on energy development, production, supply, and/or distribution.

Approved By: _____
Field Manager

Date